

between high income and low income ought to be \$20,000 income. Well let me keep a perspective or let me help you, the Legislature, keep a perspective about what we are quibbling over and I mean quibbling is the issue. The original bill cost \$2.5 million and philosophically it was correct at that figure and philosophically we advanced it from General File to Select File with one exception and that was the Beutler amendment which said \$25,000 ought to be considered low income, \$25,000 and below. The cost of the Beutler amendment, what the Beutler amendment in effect did was change the fiscal note from \$2.5 million down to \$800,000, \$835,000. Now that is, in my opinion, a reasonable place to say where the break ought to be but now we are going to come in here and offer, as Senator Von Minden does, another reduction and we are going to say that \$20,000 is the median average where we ought to make the break. Now frankly, with this amendment, moving from \$25,000 down to \$20,000 we save the treasury of the State of Nebraska and violate the principle of helping low income people, we save them a total of \$200,000. It is not big money and what has income traditionally done? It has gone up. It went up this year and it will continue to go up. It will go up because of inflation. It will go up because, I hope because, of increases in productivity and normal increases in terms of income. So soon this \$20,000 will end up being the most token of token amounts. Now maybe that is all right but frankly I think we ought to set the token amount at the \$25,000 level. It is not significant in terms of the tax loss. It is \$835,000. And you save \$200,000 by saying we are going to cut out the bulk of the middle class. Actually you're not even cutting out the bulk of the middle class. You are really cutting out low income people. So for \$200,000 I think we are very, very clearly jeopardizing the basic principle here and I would hope this Legislature every once in a while recognizes that that is what we ought to be doing, trying to establish policy...

SPEAKER NICHOL: Half a minute.

SENATOR NEWELL: ...based on some rational criteria. I think it is nit picking to try to take \$200,000 out of the fiscal note and reducing that to \$20,000 which is obviously